



## School Safety Resource Center

# Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Suggested Elements for Districts and Schools

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## AN INTRODUCTION

*This template was modeled after the U.S. Department of Education's (2007) four phase model of emergency planning: Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response and Recovery.*

*This model is also in compliance with the Colorado Safe Schools Act CRS 22-32-109.1 which requires each school district to adopt and implement a safe schools plan.*

*The Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC) has also included an Appendix Checklist at the end of this document which corresponds to this template outlining the steps found here.*

*We appreciate your feedback as we update, improve and share these documents with districts and schools across the state.*

### The Plan Introduction Should:

- Outline the importance of having a plan and the district's commitment (CRS 22-32-109.1 – Safe Schools Act).
- Outline the premise upon which your plan is designed i.e. 4-Phases of Emergency Planning: Prevention/Mitigation; Preparedness; Response; and Recovery (U.S. Dept of Education, 2007).
- Identify the need to have teams utilizing the Incident Command System CRS 22-32-109.1 (SB08-181).
- State the necessity of adapting the district plan for each unique school.
- Acknowledge that the plan is a living document that must be updated and practiced regularly.
- State the commitment to involve community emergency responders in the development, update and practice of both district and school emergency plans.

**TOOL: US Department of Education, Office of Safe & Drug-Free Schools – Practical Information on Crisis Planning** <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf>

**TOOL: Helpful Hints, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, "Components of Comprehensive School and School Districts Emergency Management Plans" [v2, Issue 2, 2007].**  
[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol2Issue2.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue2.pdf)

**TOOL: Helpful Hints, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, "Steps for Developing a School Emergency Management Plan" [v2, Issue 1, 2007].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol2Issue1.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue1.pdf)

**TOOL: Helpful Hints, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, "Engaging Administrators in School Emergency Management" [v2, Issue 5, 2007].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol2Issue5.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue5.pdf)

**TOOL: Colorado School Safety Legislation. Available on CSSRC website:**  
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622409115>





## 1. PREVENTION/MITIGATION

Prevention and mitigation are actions taken to reduce or eliminate risk to life and property from a hazard event. Both are important for the safety of students, staff and visitors to the school. Each staff member is responsible for maintaining a safe learning and work environment. District officials and staff should be constantly evaluating their environment for potential threats, both natural and human-made. Any and all steps to mitigate a potential threat should be evaluated and implemented where possible.

**TOOL: CSSRC – “Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist.” Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**

### 1.1 Identification of Teams

Various teams will be necessary to plan and/or respond to crises. Individuals may participate on multiple teams. It is not the number of teams or number of members that is important *but that the functions described are completed.*

- a. **District Safety Planning Team** – This team does the safety planning for the entire district/may also be trained to respond to individual schools as part of the District Crisis Response Team. Members of this team should also be prepared to provide through training or contracting both ongoing building safety assessments as well as assessments after crises.
- b. **District Crisis Response Team (ICS)** – This team will be trained to respond to crisis in the district and hold an ICS role in that response.
- c. **Building Safety Planning Team** – This team does the safety planning for an individual school. Members of this team should also be prepared to provide both ongoing building safety assessments as well as assessments after crises. Community emergency responders should be invited to assist with the planning by this team.
- d. **Building Crisis Response Team (ICS)** - This team provides the response to crisis in their school and may also serve on the Building Safety Planning Team. They hold ICS role designations.
- e. **Multi-Agency Crisis Planning Team** – The District Planning Team should work with community emergency responders (law enforcement and juvenile justice, fire, EMS, community mental health, victim advocates, etc.) and together form a Multi-Agency Planning Team to assist with both planning and responding as appropriate.
- f. **Threat Assessment Team** – This multidisciplinary team of no less than three members (two of whom would be on-site) would include at least one administrator, one mental health staff member and one law enforcement professional. The team must be trained in threat assessment in accordance with district policy.
- g. **Psychological Recovery Teams** – The district will train mental health professionals district wide to be available as the psychological recovery teams to identify and provide follow up interventions for students and staff for any building/district crisis.

**TOOL: CSSRC - ICS Organizational Charts, Team Lists and “Roles & Responsibilities” Documents. Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**



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## 1.2 Assessment Strategies

It is recommended that every school conduct the following regular assessments to assist in planning and evaluation of safety efforts:

### a. Physical Safety/Vulnerability Assessment of School Buildings, Grounds & Equipment.

**TOOL: US Department of Education - A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessment.**  
**[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/VA\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/VA_Report_2008.pdf)**

**TOOL: National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities Assessment Guide: Safe Schools Facilities Checklist. Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622848729>**

### b. "Hot spots" analysis and tracking of building safety resources (maps, software, sticker maps, etc.)

**TOOL: NIJ School Safety Plan Generator software as support of plan development: A Critical Incident: What to Do In the First 20 Minutes; and School Crime Operations Package (School COP) Version 1.1, May 2001 Computer CD-Rom Ordered free from the Rural Law Enforcement Technology Center (RULECTC) Tel: 606.436.8848, Otis Adams – all three available on this CD-Rom**

### c. Community-at-large assessments

### d. Psychological safety assessments

(1) Conduct School Climate Surveys:

1. *Colorado Healthy Kids Survey: [survey@omni.org](mailto:survey@omni.org)*
  - a) Youth Risk Behavior Survey:
2. *Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado at Boulder : [www.colorado.edu/cspv](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv) - 1.866.SAFE790 - free resource to Colorado schools*

### e. Conduct Resource mapping of safety, prevention, and intervention programs already in place.

**TOOL: CSSRC Resource Mapping Directions, Matrix, Triangle Directions and Triangles.**  
**Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**

## 1.3 Provide Adequate and Appropriate Supervision and Training

- a. Staff assignments for supervision including hallways, lavatories, bus stops, exits and entrances, playgrounds, etc.
- b. Staff training for rationale and response
- c. SROs
- d. Visitor identification procedures

## 1.4 Policies and Procedures

Each district and school board is encouraged to develop and/or review safety related policies and procedures.

- a. Formally **adopt National Response Framework** as required in CRS 22-32-109.1 (SB 08-181, available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)
- b. **Threat Assessment**

**TOOL: CSSRC Essentials of School Threat Assessment: Preventing Targeted School Violence.**  
**Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622848436>**



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- c. **Discipline**
  - (1) Colorado Student Discipline Manual (Colorado Attorney General's Office, rev. Jan. 2009. Available on the CSSRC website – Resources-Prevention-School Violence Prevention)
- d. **Harassment and Bullying Prevention** CRS 22-32-109.1 (SB 01-80)
- e. **Technology** (HB05-1036 Internet Safety Plan. CSSRC website: under Colorado School Safety Legislation)
- f. **Drug and Alcohol Prevention**
- g. **School Engagement and Truancy**
- h. **Pandemic Procedures**
- i. **Food Handling Procedures**
- j. **Mail Handling Procedures**
- k. **Policy and Procedures for the use or non-use of volunteers during a crisis**
- l. **Other Safety Related Policies and Procedures**

## 1.5 Provide Anonymous Reporting

Schools are encouraged to have a mechanism for students to report dangerous situations/people. Providing an anonymous means of reporting encourages those reports.

- a. **SAFE2TELL** Anonymous Reporting Line is implemented and promoted to students, staff and parents
  - [www.safe2tell.org](http://www.safe2tell.org) ; Office Telephone: (719)520-7435
- b. **Other:**

## 1.6 Develop Written Interagency Information Sharing Agreements (HB 00-1119 and SB 00-133) with:

- a. **Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice**
- b. **Community Mental Health Agencies**

**TOOL:** State Attorney General's Office - [www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov)

## 1.7 Increase Violence Prevention Awareness for Staff

Staff Education should be provided regarding awareness, response and reporting of behavioral concerns, such as:

- a. **Child Abuse Awareness & Reporting Responsibilities**
- b. **Mental Health Issues Awareness**
- c. **Suicide Prevention, Response and Reporting**
- d. **School Engagement & Truancy Prevention**
- e. **Substance Abuse Awareness, Prevention and Response**
- f. **Violence Prevention, Awareness and Reporting Procedures**
- g. **Other**

**TOOL:** <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pichildabuse.htm>

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Child Abuse and Neglect Issues in School

Colorado Department of Human Services Child Welfare Reporting Information

**NOTE:** You, as the individual who suspects the abuse, are legally responsible for making certain that the report is made to the designated agencies immediately. This legal responsibility is not satisfied by merely reporting your suspicion to other school personnel.





## 1.8 Provide Evidence - Based Violence Prevention Programs/Strategies to Students

Schools are encouraged to provide a continuum of evidence based prevention and intervention efforts, including:

- a. Harassment/Bullying Prevention
- b. Positive Behavioral Supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org))
- c. Suicide Prevention
- d. Drug & Alcohol Prevention
- e. School Engagement/Truancy
- f. Social Emotional Learning
- g. Personal Safety and Safe Routes to Schools instruction
- h. Other

**TOOL: Evidence-Based Program Lists available on the CSSRC website:**

**<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622845792>**

**TOOL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Website Link:**

**<http://www.casel.org/home.php>**

## 1.9 Provide Comprehensive School Health and Psychological Services

Schools are encouraged to provide resources for or links to comprehensive health and psychological services, such as:

- a. Health Education
- b. School Nurses
- c. School Counselors
- d. School Social Workers
- e. School Psychologists
- f. Drug and Alcohol Services
- g. Early Intervention/Problem Solving Team
- h. Establish connections with Community Mental Health Services
- i. Other

**TOOL: A Guide to School Mental Health Services published by the Colorado Department of Education, 2007. Web link:**

**<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/Guide2MntlHlthSvcs.pdf>**

## 1.10 Additional Prevention/Mitigation Considerations (Recommended by US Dept of Ed)

### a. Infectious Diseases Prevention/Mitigation Measures

- (1) Surveillance system in place
- (2) Staff education
- (3) Parent/guardian education
- (4) Preventive hygiene
- (5) Coordination with local health officials
- (6) Sanitation supplies





**TOOL: Is guidance available for incorporating pandemic influenza plans into a school or district's emergency management plan?**

Yes. ED has established a pandemic influenza website with several resources that provide useful information for schools on developing pandemic influenza plans, available at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/pandemic/index.html>.

More information can also be found at <http://www.flu.gov/planning-preparedness/school/index.html#>

[http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL\\_Vol4Issue1.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol4Issue1.pdf)

<http://www.flu.gov/> provides one-stop access to U.S. Government H1N1, avian and pandemic flu information. A federal government Website managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. - Washington, D.C. 20201

**b. Food Handling and Storage Precautions**

- (1) Contamination prevention
- (2) Biosecurity measures

**TOOL: Is guidance available for incorporating food defense plans into a school or district's emergency management plan?**

Yes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed several resources for schools related to food security and emergency management. These materials are available on the USDA's website at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/emergency-preparedness/emergency-preparedness-school-food-service>

In addition, ED and the REMS TA Center, in collaboration with the USDA, have developed an advanced training presentation on food defense. The presentation may be accessed at [http://rems.ed.gov/PageDispaly.aspx?page=trainings\\_emergency\\_management\\_Advanced\\_Topics\\_in\\_Emergency\\_Management](http://rems.ed.gov/PageDispaly.aspx?page=trainings_emergency_management_Advanced_Topics_in_Emergency_Management)

<http://foodsafety.tamu.edu/courses/food-handlers-course/> -This course is recommended for all food service employees to help promote the service of safe food. It is a basic overview of food safety principals and practices that are necessary to ensure you serve safe food at your establishment. Texas A & M University website





## c. Mail Handling and Delivery Safety

- (1) Consider a central location
- (2) Staff training on safe handling

**TOOL:** The Interagency Security Committee (ISC) is pleased to issue Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling. This document was developed by the ISC Safe Mailing sub-committee and identifies best mail room operations practices used by the federal agencies. This unclassified document is provided to assist security managers in implementing safe mail handling practices at their facilities.

Best Practices for Safe Mail Handling is available via the ISC secure portal. It is located in the library under ISC Published Documents. The document also is available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/41060153/DHS-Mail-Handling-Security> . Questions or comments should be directed to [TheISC@DHS.gov](mailto:TheISC@DHS.gov).

In Process





## 2. Preparedness

The preparedness phase includes developing an emergency plan, assigning roles and back-up roles for the plan implementation and practicing the plan. It requires planning for the worst-case scenarios in order to be ready to respond in a rapid, coordinated and effective manner when an actual crisis occurs.

**TOOL: CSSRC – “Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist.” Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**

### 2.1 Developing the District and School Comprehensive School Safety Plans and Train Teams

“Schools must adopt a safe school plan.” (SB00-133 Safe Schools Act. Available on the CSSRC website under “Colorado School Safety Legislation.”)

- School Board formally adopts National Response Framework (SB08-181. Available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)
- District develops MOUs with community partners as outlines in the Prevention Phase. (SB08-181)
- Superintendent will be responsible for final approval of all School Safety and Readiness Management Plans.

#### 2.1a. Training. Train District and School Teams

- (1) District Safety Planning Team will develop the district plan in collaboration with the
- (2) Multi-Agency Crisis Planning Team includes the District Safety Planning Team and community first responders as needed.
- (3) This will include the annual assigning of ICS roles, back-ups and gathering contact information to the District Crisis Response Team.
- (4) The school principal and Building Safety Planning Team will develop the plan for each site using the District Safety Planning Team and community first responders as needed.
- (5) Each Building Safety Planning Team will assign ICS roles, back-ups and gather contact information to form the Building Crisis Response Team.
  1. *Recommended minimum trainings for all planning team members: FEMA – IS 100.SCa Introduction to ICS for Schools and IS-362 Multi-Hazard Emergency Training for Schools (<http://training.fema.gov/>)*
  2. *Recommended minimum trainings for all response team members: FEMA – IS 100.SCa*
  3. *Those with federal grants are required to complete additional trainings. See the FEMA website or contact your grant administrator.*
  4. *Designate Incident Command Structure assignments, including contact information for key personnel and at least one back-up person for each role. (SB08-181. Available on the CSSRC website under Colorado School Safety Legislation.)*
- (6) Develop and train a Threat Assessment Team(s)
- (7) Develop and train a Psychological Recovery Team(s)
- (8) Develop a Damage Assessment Team
- (9) Identify staff members trained in CPR

#### 2.1b. Update Organizational and Supporting Information Essential to the Comprehensive School Safety Plans:

- (1) Updated floor and site plans
- (2) Updated topographic, floodplain and street maps
- (3) Designate key operational locations including:
  1. *Incident command post*



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2. *Evacuation sites both on and off-campus*
3. *Shelter-in-place zones*
4. *Staging areas for emergency personnel*
5. *Media communications center*
6. *Parent/student reunification sites*
7. *Other:*

## **2.1c. Develop Universal Emergency Actions for All Students and Staff**

- (1) Lockdown
- (2) Lockout (Secured Building)
- (3) Shelter-in-Place
- (4) Evacuation
- (5) Release/Reunification

## **2.1d. Develop Plans and Procedures for Students and Staff with Disabilities**

- (1) Identify students and staff needing assistance
- (2) Devise individualized plans for assistance and identify all those needed to implement plan
- (3) Have information available to notify first responders of these individuals and designate staging areas for evacuation.
- (4) Train all appropriate students and staff necessary to assist in the event of an emergency.

**TOOL: Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities, website link:**  
[http://nod.org/research\\_publications/emergency\\_preparedness\\_materials/](http://nod.org/research_publications/emergency_preparedness_materials/)

**TOOL: Readiness and Emergency Management Technical Assistance Center, Considerations for Students and Staff with Disabilities, website link:**  
[http://rems.ed.gov/PageDispaly.aspx?page=trainings\\_emergency\\_management\\_Advanced\\_Topics\\_in\\_Emergency\\_Management](http://rems.ed.gov/PageDispaly.aspx?page=trainings_emergency_management_Advanced_Topics_in_Emergency_Management)

**TOOL: REMSExpress Newsletter “Integrating Students with Special Needs into Emergency Response Planning” [v2, Issue1, 2006].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Disability\\_NewsletterV2I1.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Disability_NewsletterV2I1.pdf)

## **2.1e. Develop Plans and Procedures for Field Trips**

- (1) Itinerary appropriate
- (2) Detailed permission slips with medical information
- (3) Overnight accommodations appropriate
- (4) Trained and adequate numbers of adult chaperones
- (5) Emergency Management Plan for trip
- (6) Check of student insurance policies

## **2.1f. Develop Plans and Procedures for Community Users of Facilities**

- (1) Policies for outside users including complimentary mission
- (2) Duty to supervise?
- (3) Users complete a facilities or joint use agreement
- (4) Proof of insurance with district named as additional insured on their policy
- (5) Users have an Emergency Management Plan
- (6) Implement a hazard reporting system



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## 2.2 Establish Written Memoranda of Understanding for Response with the Following Agencies:

- a. Law Enforcement and Juvenile Justice (SB00-133; HB00-1119)
- b. Fire Department (SB08-181)
- c. EMS (SB08-181)
- d. Community Mental Health Agencies (SB00-133)
- e. Other:

**TOOL:** State Attorney General's Office - [www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov)

## 2.3 Develop and Implement Effective Communications

- a. **Interoperability**
  - (1) Within district
  - (2) With emergency responders
- b. **Staff communications**
  - (1) Develop process
  - (2) Update contact information periodically
- c. **Student communications**
  - (1) Develop process and train staff to deliver messages to students
  - (2) Develop and maintain accountability procedures throughout crisis
- d. **Parent communications**
  - (1) Develop emergency notification process & communicate this to parents
  - (2) Develop parent/student reunification process & communicate this to parents
  - (3) Update parent and emergency information periodically
- e. **Media communications**
  - (1) Designated individual
  - (2) Designated staging area

## 2.4 Conduct Annual Inventories of Safety Equipment and Supplies.

- a. **Inventory all assets and maintain records of inventory. Including:**
  - (1) Radios
  - (2) **Go-Kits: These kits should be packed and ready at all times and should accompany the appropriate staff person each time a drill is practiced.**

They include:

    1. *Administrators' go-kits*
    2. *Medical go-kits*
    3. *Classroom go-kits*
    4. *Others as needed for your population/location*
  - (3) **The school should also have supplies on hand for an extended shelter-in-place situation with students including but not limited to: water, food, flashlights, diapers for siblings sheltering in the building, etc.**

**TOOL:** US Department of Education REMS Helpful Hints "Emergency Go-Kits" [Vol. 1 Issue 2, 2006]. [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol1Issue1.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol1Issue1.pdf)

## 2.5 First Responders Collaboration

Make district and building emergency plans and vital information available to community first responders.

- a. The Automated Critical Asset Management System (**ACAMS**) is available to all Colorado schools to assist in the collection and storage of your emergency information so that it can be easily accessed by your community emergency responders (contact the Colorado Office of Preparedness and



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Security, Critical Infrastructure Protection Team at [ciac@ciac.co.gov](mailto:ciac@ciac.co.gov) and for further information you may choose to watch the video:

[http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc\\_1190729724456.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/files/programs/gc_1190729724456.shtm)

The Colorado Department of Public Safety including the CSSRC, Fire Safety and the Office of Preparedness and Security all recommend school emergency information be uploaded into the ACAMS system. Assistance for schools from your local community responders is available.

- b. Districts may also choose other commercially prepared software packages. These tend to be expensive and it would be wise to compare the features with ACAMS as the amount of up-front work required to upload the information is about the same for each. If your district chooses a vendor package, it is still important to be working with your local community responders as you write your plans and upload the information into whatever computer package you use. Your district might choose to require any outside vendor to also load all the appropriate information into ACAMS as a condition of your contract with that vendor.

## 2.6 Training in Universal Emergency Actions and Response for All Staff and Students

Establish your crisis team meetings, exercise and drill schedules. Emergency exercises for the four universal emergency actions (See Response 3.1) need to be conducted annually with **After Action Plans** and should include community emergency responders as often as possible. There are several different types of emergency exercises:

- a. **Tabletop exercise** – a group discussion guided through a simulated emergency/disaster. A thorough yet low stress group problem solving process.
- b. **Drill** – A coordinated, supervised exercise used to test a single specific operation or function. It involves deployment of equipment and personnel.
- c. **Functional Exercise**– This is a fully simulated interactive exercise that tests the capability of the school to respond to a simulated event. It focuses on coordination or multiple functions or organization. Strives for realism, short of actually deploying emergency response personnel to the scene.
- d. **Full-scale exercise** – This is an exercise that is conducted as close to reality as possible, involving all emergency response functions and requires full deployment of equipment and personnel.

**TOOL: REMSExpress Newsletter, “Emergency Exercises: An Effective way to Validate School Safety Plans” [v2, Issue 3, 2006].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Emergency\\_NewsletterV2I3.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/Emergency_NewsletterV2I3.pdf)

**TOOL: Helpful Hints, “Planning and Conducting Functional Exercises” [v2, Issue 4, 2007].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol2Issue4.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue4.pdf)

## 2.7 Release/Reunification Planning

Release/Reunification has been identified as a particularly challenging issue for schools and it is recommended that schools focus on this with exercise development, practice and clear policy communication to parents. This process requires accurate accountability of students and release of students to authorized adults.

- a. **Develop a plan**
  - (1) Clearly articulate expectations
  - (2) Translate information as necessary
- b. **Train staff and students on the plan**
- c. **Communicate the plan to parents**

**TOOL: Readiness and Emergency Management Technical Center, Lessons Learned “Responding to and Recovering from an Active Shooter Incident That Turns Into a Hostage Situation” [v2, Issue6, 2007].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL\\_Vol2Issue6.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol2Issue6.pdf)





## 3. Response

Although in an emergency districts will follow the Incident Command Structure, all school employees should be empowered to initiate a response. All school staff should be both well informed and routinely trained in the actions possible in an emergency.

**TOOL: CSSRC – “Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist.” Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**

### Considerations in a Crisis Response

- a. Safety of students and staff is the primary objective followed by stabilization of the scene and limiting acceleration/growth of the incident.
- b. Schools are encouraged NOT to use code words for emergency actions but communicate calmly and clearly about the actions necessary. These actions (although your district might label them differently) need to be agreed upon ahead of time and will include:
  - (1) Evacuation, Lockdown, Lockout/Secure the Perimeter, Shelter –in-Place
  - (2) Any combination of the above may be necessary to meet the objectives of safety; stabilization and containing the emergency.
- c. Emergency responders should be contacted as soon as possible even if the incident may be resolved before their arrival. Err on the side of more assistance rather than less.
- d. Notify the district authorities as soon as possible.
- e. Triage injuries and provide emergency first aid.
- f. Trust leadership and follow incident command including unified command when first responders arrive.
- g. Be sure your procedures for the orderly, safe reunification of students and parents is in place, practiced and communicated annually to parents. Again, this is often the most challenging aspect of emergency response for schools.
- h. As part of the ICS, a district public information officer (PIO) is identified.
  - (1) A crisis team member at the school site needs to be identified until the district PIO can arrive.
  - (2) A staging area away from the crisis, evacuation site or parent reunification site needs to be identified immediately. Law enforcement officers might need to be alerted for assistance in establishing this site.
  - (3) Alerting media to district announcements via the website may be part of the response.
  - (4) All information released to the media should have prior approval.

### 3.1 Implement Protocols for Emergency Actions

All school staff, students and parents are trained in preparedness for all hazards including the protocol for parent/student reunification. It is vital to work with your first responders in planning these actions and locations.

**3.1a. Lockdown** – Lockdown procedures are used to protect building occupants from potential dangers in the building or external threats that enter the building. Actions are used in situations where an actual emergency or crisis threatening the safety of building occupants is occurring or has occurred on the school campus. It may also be used when the potential for such a situation is high.

- (1) Identify appropriate “safe” zones within the school.
- (2) Plan procedures for lock-down.

**3.1b. Lockout/Secured Building** – Lockout procedures are used in a heightened state of security, to secure the building and protect building occupants where a higher than normal threat is present near or in the vicinity of the campus. The lockout condition is used as a preventative measure when threat of danger is outside the school building, and may be in place for a few minutes or longer periods of



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time, until the threat to safety is resolved. The threat might include animal sightings, criminal activity in the area or suspicious persons. Educational activities may continue within the building as decided by administration.

- (1) Plan procedures for lockout/secure perimeter.

**3.1c. Shelter-in-Place** – Shelter-in-place procedures are used when the building is seen as a place of safety and students and staff must remain in a school building for extended periods of time during an event such as a weather emergency, a chemical contaminant, or terrorist attack. Shelter-in-place means to take shelter where you are and isolate the inside environment from the outside environment.

- (1) Identify appropriate “safe” zones within the school.
- (2) Plan procedures for shelter-in-place.

**3.1d. Evacuation** – Evacuation procedures are used in a variety of school emergency situations. An evacuation may be signaled by a fire alarm, direction over the intercom system or by the instruction of emergency personnel. A partial evacuation of a section of the building may also occur as a situation warrants. Some evacuations may involve evacuation to an off-campus site, as instructed. If evacuation is other than a fire situation and to a pre-designated safety site on campus, instructions should be given.

- (1) Evacuation sites both on and off-campus are identified.
- (2) Evacuation sites off-campus are checked for safety compliance.
- (3) Plan procedures for evacuations.
- (4) Students/staff with special needs – All emergency action plans must take into account students and staff with physical or emotional disabilities and prepare Individualized Evacuation Plans for them.

## 3.2 Institute Response Procedures for the Following Circumstances:

### 3.2a. Human-made Crises:

- (1) Bomb threats
- (2) Hostage situations
- (3) Intruder
- (4) Missing student/kidnapping
- (5) Report of a weapon on campus
- (6) Suspicious packages
- (7) Threats

**TOOL: Lessons Learned from the REMS Technical Assistance Center - “Communication and Collaboration During Natural Disasters; Lessons Learned from Past Experience” [V3, Issue 2, 2008].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL\\_Vol3Issue2.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/LL_Vol3Issue2.pdf)

**TOOL: Helpful Hints from the REMS Technical Assistance Center – “Establishing and Developing Strategic Partnerships with Media Representatives” [V2, Issue 8, 2007].** [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH\\_Vol2Issue8.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/HH_Vol2Issue8.pdf)

- (8) Weapons/violence incidents

### 3.2b. Accidents and Medical Emergencies:

- (1) Fire
- (2) Hazardous materials
- (3) Medical emergencies



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1. *Injury/illness/death (including student/staff appearing to be under the influence)*
2. *Reasons to call 911*
3. *Guidelines for medical transport*
4. *Medical transport plan*

## 3.2c. Transportation Accidents

## 3.2d. Utility failures

## 3.2e. Pandemic Response Plan

## 3.2f. Weather and Other Natural Disasters:

- (1) Weather alerts
- (2) Snowstorms
- (3) Thunderstorms/Flash flooding/Hail & Lightening
- (4) Tornadoes
- (5) Earthquakes

## 3.2g. Other Specific Crises:

- (1) Child Abuse
- (2) Death of student
- (3) Death of staff member
- (4) Memorials at school
- (5) Restraint/physical intervention procedures
- (6) Self-injury and other risk behaviors
- (7) Sexual Assault
- (8) Suicide
  1. *Suicide threat/ideation*
  2. *Suicide attempt*
  3. *Suicide completion*
  4. *Suicide and memorials*
- (9) Site specific hazards i.e. mountain lions, bears, snakes, etc.

**TOOL: REMSExpress newsletters from the REMS Technical Assistance Center– “Paying Tribute to Deceased School Community Members” & “Coping with the Death of a Student or Staff Member” [V3, Issue 3 & V3, Issue 2, 2007]. [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/ERCNewsletters\\_Memorials.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/ERCNewsletters_Memorials.pdf), & [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/CopingW\\_Death\\_StudentOrStaff.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/CopingW_Death_StudentOrStaff.pdf)**

## 3.3 After Action Reports

SB08-181 requires written evaluations after exercises and all real world incidents. This is an opportunity to not only document the details of the response but to modify procedures in an ongoing effort to improve response.

**TOOL: Lessons Learned from the REMS Technical Assistance Center – After Action Reports: “After-Action Reports: Capturing Lessons Learned and Identifying Areas for Improvement” [V2, Issue 1, 2007]. [http://rems.ed.gov/docs/After\\_ActionReports.pdf](http://rems.ed.gov/docs/After_ActionReports.pdf)**





## 4. Recovery

The goals of recovery are to return to education and restore the infrastructure of the school as quickly as possible. Recovery of the building begins with damage assessment and debris removal and continues until the affected area(s) is returned to pre-emergency conditions.

District and school staff need to be trained in assessing the emotional needs of students, staff and responders and to deal with the emotional impact of the crisis. Often it may be best to invite the crisis recovery team from outside the school immediately impacted to assist initially. This is because the school crisis recovery team may also be affected and may need to be available to sustain services to students and staff for an extended time beyond the initial crisis.

When community mental health agencies will be utilized, interagency agreements and background checks as well as parental permission to use such services need to be secured prior to the incident. Training community mental health personnel with the school/district recovery teams is optimal.

**TOOL: CSSRC – “Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Elements Checklist.” Available on CSSRC website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPS-SafeSchools/CBON/1251622837278>**

### 4.1. Physical/Structural Recovery

- a. Ensure safety at educational site.
  - (1) Safety measures addressed
  - (2) Security measures visible
  - (3) Retrieval of personal belongings
- b. Assess critical infrastructure and support services and consideration of utilizing an alternative educational site.
  - a. Damage assessment team
- c. Determine availability of equipment and supplies
- d. Resume transportation and food services
- e. Insurance support
- f. Documentation including photos
- g. Liability/legal issues

### 4.2 Business Recovery - Business continuity plan (BCP) or continuity of operations plan (COOP)

- a. Restore district administrative functions
- b. Ensure staff are supported
- c. Payroll system functioning
- d. Accounts payable and receivables restored
- e. Student registration in place
- f. Other records systems as needed
- g. Decision making in place for
  - (1) school closings/alternate sites
  - (2) restoration of business functions
  - (3) rapid execution of contracts





**4.3 Restoration of Academic Learning** – primary function of schools and all other elements of recovery phase will impact academics.

- a. Decision making process in place for alterations to academic locations and/or routines.
- b. On-going communication with staff, students and parents

## **4.4 Psychological/Emotional Recovery**

- a. Reaffirm Physical Health & Safety
- b. Support Psychological Recovery

**(1) Immediate mobilization of the District/School Psychological Recovery Teams who have been previously trained.**

- *Psychological First Aid*, The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress  
[www.nctsn.com/nccts](http://www.nctsn.com/nccts)
- *PREPaRE*, National Association of School Psychologists

**TOOL: PREPaRE Curriculum – <http://www.nasponline.org/prepare/index.aspx>**

- *As well as the FEMA/ICS courses IS-100.Sc and IS-362.*

**(2) Teams conduct Psychological Triage**

1. *Primary level*
2. *Secondary level*
3. *Tertiary level*

**(3) Implementing immediate recovery also includes:**

1. Limiting student/staff exposure to trauma
2. Providing ongoing assessment of emotional needs of students, staff, families and responders and providing resources according to your crisis team's training model.
3. Consider establishing a "safe room" for those students needing support beyond that provided in each classroom. This will assist in returning the building to the business of education.
4. Communicate with students, staff, families and the media often and appropriately as timely information is important to both physical and psychological recovery.

**(4) Implement long-term recovery efforts.**

1. *Utilizing school/district teams as well as appropriate community mental health agencies.*
  - These will likely include community mental health providers, victim advocates, religious leaders or other appropriate outside intervention providers.
  - Memoranda of Understanding should be drafted with these partners prior to needing their assistance.
  - These community providers should be trained with the school recovery team if you plan to use their assistance.
  - They should also have all background checks/clearances required of school staff.
  - Parent permission needs to be obtained. Students should be told they have the right to only speak with school staff, if they choose. The school board needs to determine whether a passive or active permission to use outside providers will be necessary with parents and obtain permission at the beginning of each school year. Some districts have chosen to use a passive permission outlined in the student handbook



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2. *Provide ongoing student updates and assessments*
3. *Provide ongoing staff updates and assessments*
4. *Provide necessary assistance to the caregivers*
5. *Conduct team member “debriefings”*
6. *Continue parent communication*
7. *Continue community information*
8. *Carefully consider memorials – these might require a board policy so that efforts are consistent.*
9. *Plan for anniversaries for individuals, groups and/or the entire school community.*

## 4.5 Capture Lessons Learned and Make Necessary Revisions to All Plans

### Other References:

1. Adams 12 School District Crisis Plan (2009).
2. Borland, L. (2010). The Things You Need to Know About Safe Schools Planning: Tips, Tools and Techniques [Colorado Safe Schools Regional Training Presentation]. Thornton.
3. Hodges, L.R. (2010). NIMS-Based Incident Management Planning Guidance for Schools. Colorado Division of Emergency Management.
4. Reeves, M.A, Kanan, L.M., & Plog, A.E. (2010). Comprehensive Planning for Safe Learning Environments: A School Professional’s Guide to Integrating Physical and Psychological Safety-Prevention through Recovery. New York: Routledge.
5. Sullivan, P.J., Jr., Kanan, L.M. (2008). Emergency Response and Crisis Management Guide. Cherry Creek School District.
6. School Emergency Management Online Course (2010). REMS Technical Assistance Center, U.S. Department of Education.
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